

My Life as a Collector

My mother-in-law, Kathryn Norton, was an avid stamp collector. She collected U.S. stamps, plate blocks, first day covers, international stamps, and United Nations stamps. After I married Carol I also got very interested in collecting stamps. It became a wonderful common interest with my mother-in-law. She lived in Santa Barbara so every time we visited, she would spend time going through her books with me. When she died in 1987 I inherited her extensive collection. At the time of her death I estimated that the collection was worth at least \$7,000. It's worth far less today.

I was not as active in collecting as Kathryn. I collected U.S. stamps, first day covers, and I tried to keep her United Nations collection current. I subscribed to Linn's *Stamp News* and read it each week.

There was a store on San Mateo and Comanche that had a large stock of stamps and all the equipment you needed to collect stamps. The store was about a 10 minute walk from my house so I used to go there often. I did not buy anything expensive but I did purchase a lot of first day covers and individual stamps at that store. It has long since gone out of business.

At some point about 15 years or so ago I began to lose interest in stamp collecting. I do save any interesting stamps that come on letters in the mail and I save one stamp out of each of the books of stamps that we buy to use as postage. I have not done any collecting of United Nations stamps in recent years.

I have shared the extra stamps that I have with others. Our neighbors' son, Kenny Henry, who is now the very successful track coach at Cleveland High School in Rio Rancho, and I shared stamps for a while. My nephew, Jason Runolfson, got a lot of stamps from me when he was a kid—he says that he still has them. Jason's daughter Abigail, who is 13, has become my new stamp collecting buddy. Every time I go to Utah I take her a load of stamps. If she continues to be interested, I will probably end up giving her the entire collection over the next few years. I had hoped that one of my granddaughters would get interested neither of them has shown interest.

In recent years I have been interested in collecting coins. I have a lot of Indian Head nickels and old dimes. I have collected presidential dollars—I would buy 5 of each dollar as they were issued. I gave one set to my brother-in-law, Cliff Pessetto, in Utah and a set to each of my

granddaughters. I also have collections of state quarters and other coins. My granddaughter, Hazel Holmes, seems very interested so I assume she will get the coins when I am gone. When my mother died two years ago we discovered that she had a lot of coins that I have kept: 50 cent pieces, Eisenhower dollars, Susan B. Anthony dollars, and the Sacagawea dollars. None of these coins have much value beyond their face value but I will keep them.

I don't have anything of great value but I have enjoyed doing the collecting. I enjoy learning about history and the collection of both stamps and coins has deepened my knowledge of history. I will probably continue to collect coins but I am really not doing it seriously. Maybe I will get more interested in the future.